

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 03833 041619Z
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DEPT PLEASE TRANSMIT OAU COLLECTIVE AND ALL ARAB CAPITALS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR PORG OAU XF
SUBJECT: AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT

REF: CAIRO 3751

SUMMARY. OPENING ADDRESSES TO AFRO-ARAB MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
DRAW LINES SUMMIT LIKELY TO FOLLOW: AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT
IN EXCHANGE FOR ARAB ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. NO SUBSTANCE HAS
EMERGED AFTER FIRST DAY'S MEETINGS AND NOT MUCH EXPECTED BY
OBSERVERS IN CAIRO. (STILL UNCLEAR HOW MANY CHIEFS OF STATE WILL
ATTEND.) SUMMIT STRUCTURED TO AVOID AREAS OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT.
END SUMMARY.

1. AFRO-ARAB MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE GOT UNDERWAY ON SCHEDULE
EVENING MARCH 3 UNDER CO-CHAIRMANSHIP OF TOGO (FONMIN KODJO)
AND TUNISIA (FONMIN CHATTI). EGYPTIAN FONMIN FAHMY'S
OPENING ADDRESS LITTLE MORE THAN HIGH MINDED EVOCATION OF PARALLEL
ARAB AND AFRICAN STRUGGLES AGAINST "IMPERIALISM, RACISM AND
EXPLOITATION". HE NOTED THAT BATTLE TO "ELIMINATE REMNANTS
OF COLONIALISM" CONTINUES AND ENVISIONED CONFERENCE LEADING TO
REINFORCED COMMITMENTS OF COOPERATION. FAHMY MADE SOME VAGUE
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 03833 041619Z

REFERENCES TO ECONOMIC COOPERATION, BUT THRUST OF HIS SPEECH
WAS CLEARLY JOINT POLITICAL ACTION, THEME THAT CHATTY
REINFORCED IN HIS BRIEF ADDRESS LATER. SHAPE CONFERENCE WILL
TAKE, HOWEVER, WAS SHARPLY LMNED BY KODJO, SPEAKING IMMEDIATELY
AFTER FAHMY, WITH SPEECH WHICH WAS ESSENTIALLY SHARP CRITICISM OF
ARAB PARSIMONY TOWARDS AFRICA.

2. MARCH 4 ATTENDANCE FIGURE FOR MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE IS 60 "COUNTRIES". 39 AFRICAN AND 21 ARAB. MISSING PARTICIPANT IS APPARENTLY MALAWI, WHICH PRESUMABLY BOYCOTTING CAIRO OVER PAST DIFFERENCES ON POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL. FOREIGN CHIEFS OF MISSION HERE ARE EXPRESSING CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN NUMBER OF CHIEFS OF STATE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN SUMMIT. MFA CHIEF OF PROTOCOL SAYS 45 WILL COME, WHILE PRESS HAS MENTIONED FIGURE OF 36. SOVIET AND CHINESE AMBASSADORS HAVE SEPARATELY PROFESSED BELIEF THAT NO MORE THAN 50 PERCENT ARE LIKELY TO ATTEND. SEEMS CLEAR THAT, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, NOBODY REALLY KNOWS. OUR GUESS IS THAT ARAB REPRESENTATION LIKELY TO BE MORE COMPLETE, WHICH MAY PLACE AFRICANS AT DISADVANTAGE IF IN EVENT TWO SIDES ABLE TO MAINTAIN UNITED FRONTS IN BARGAINING SESSIONS.

3. WITHOUT EXCEPTION, OBSERVERS HERE SEE CONFERENCE AS EXERCISE DESIGNED TO PUT "PROPER" PRICE TAG ON CONTINUED FULL AFRICAN BACKING FOR ARAB MIDDLE EAST POSITIONS. ARABS ARE ON DEFENSIVE AND ALL INDICATIONS POINT TO PROBABILITY THAT AFRICANS WILL PRESS HARD ON ECONOMIC ISSUES. PRESS MARCH 4 REPORTS CONSIDERABLE CONFERENCE INTEREST IN TANZANIAN PROPOSAL FOR 2 BILLION DOLLAR PROGRAM OF LOANS FOR AFRICA OVER FOUR YEARS, SPECIAL FINANCIAL AID FOR "POOR AFRICAN COUNTRIES" AFFECTED BY WORLD PRICE INCREASES AND AID TO SOUTHERN AFRICAN "CONFRONTATION STATES". PRESS AGAIN MENTIONS MOVE TO INCREASE ARAB-AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND, TODAY ALSO RAISING POSSIBILITY THAT A "NON-ALIGNED DEVELOPMENT FUND" MAY BE ESTABLISHED IN KUWAIT. SUCCESS OF AFRICAN EFFORT MAY TO SOME EXTENT DEPEND ON GETTING ARABS TO TAKE THEM SERIOUSLY AND THEY MAY BOOST THEIR CHANCES IF HEAD OF STATE REPRESENTATION IS INDEED SUBSTANTIAL. IRONICALLY, ARABS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 CAIRO 03833 041619Z

MAY FIND THEMSELVES UNDER PRESSURE FROM WITHIN THEIR OWN RANKS TO BE GENEROUS WITH AFRICANS, E.G. FROM MOROCCO, WHOSE INTEREST IN AFRICA IS AS GREAT AS IT IS IN MIDDLE EAST. OCCURS TO US THAT ARABS, ON REFLECTION, MIGHT DECIDE THAT TANZANIAN PACKAGE LETS THEM OFF FAIRLY CHEAPLY, ENDORSE PROPOSAL, AND RUN. WE HAVE NO INDICATION THUS FAR OF REAL EXTENT OF AFRICAN EXPECTATIONS.

4. DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY DOES NOT EXPECT MUCH NEW POLITICAL SUBSTANCE TO EMERGE FROM SUMMIT. AS YET WE SEE NO REASON TO DISAGREE WITH THIS VIEW. INTEREST, IN FACT, IS QUITE SUBDUED, AND OUR INTERLOCUTORS ARE CLEARLY THINKING AS MUCH ABOUT UPCOMING PALESTINIAN NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING (CAIRO, MARCH 12) AS ABOUT SUMMIT. SOVIETS AND CHINESE ARE CAREFULLY WATCHING DEGREE OF OUR INTEREST IN SUMMIT, HOWEVER, WE MAINTAINING ACADEMIC POSTURE.

5. ACCORDING ARAB LEAGUE'S SENIOR ASST. SYG NOFAL, MEETING HAS BEEN STRUCTURED SO AS TO AVOID POSSIBILITY THAT DISCUSSION WILL STRAY TO INTERNECINE ARAB OR AFRICAN DISPUTES SUCH AS HORN OF AFRICA, MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT POLICY, ETC.

QADHAFI MAKING MATTERS SOMEWHAT SIMPLER BY, AS WE UNDERSTAND, REFUSING TO COME TO CAIRO, BUT LOCAL PRESS HAS JUXTAPOSED WITH ITS SUMMIT COVERAGE PROMINENT REPORTS OF QADHAFI'S AMBITION TO IMPOSE TOTAL DICTATORSHIP ON LIBYA. CONSENSUS HERE IS THAT ADVANCE PREPARATION HAS BEEN MADE FOR PARTICIPANTS TO AGREE TO DISAGREE, BUT NO ONE EXCLUDES POSSIBILITY THAT HEATED INTERNAL DEBATE COULD SURFACE AND MAR CONFERENCE'S IMAGE.

6. GOE SEEMS TO BE KEEPING ITS NOSE ABOVE WATER ON ADMINISTRATIVE FRONT, BUT JUST BARELY. SECURITY, IS USUAL, IS MORE EVIDENT-- CORDONS OF POLICE AROUND HOTELS, TRAFFIC DEVIATED, ETC-- THAN EFFECTIVE-- HILTON DOORMAN WAS DECIDING WHO SHOULD HAVE ENTRY TO HOTEL EVENING MARCH 3. GOE SEEMS TO HAVE EVERYONE HOUSED BUT IS STAGGERING UNDER BURDEN AND DREADS ONSLAUGHT WHICH WILL BEGIN JUST BEFORE SUMMIT ITSELF. MFA IS PLEADING WITH PARTICIPANT NATIONS TO KEEP DELEGATIONS DOWN TO NO MORE THAN A LEAN 50 MEMBERS. UGANDANS ALREADY NUMBER 80 AND IDI HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 CAIRO 03833 041619Z

YET TO COME.
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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDRESSEES.

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